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From: Skahen, Mary (EHS) <mary.skahen@massmail.state.ma.us>
Sent: Thursday, July 26, 2012 3:04 PM
To: Hanchett, James (DPH)
Subject: Important Weather Advisory from EOHS

The National Weather Service in Albany has issued a Tornado Watch for Berkshire County until 9:00 PM tonight. A Flash Flood Watch also is in effect for all counties except Berkshire, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket from 4:00 PM today until 9:00 AM Friday.

Based on the potential for severe weather across the Commonwealth, including severe thunderstorms, strong winds, hail, torrential rain, and isolated tornadoes, the State Emergency Operations Center is increasing its activation level to Level III (Partial Activation) effective immediately.

In preparation for this threat of severe weather, there are several actions staff should take to keep themselves safe. Please refer to the following guidance for keeping safe during a tornado and other severe weather:

If you are in your office:

- Check with your office safety officer about evacuation protocols and guidance.
- If an evacuation is ordered, go to the predetermined shelter areas. Interior hallways on the lowest floor are usually safest. Stay away from windows and open spaces.
- Do not open windows. Use the time to seek shelter.
- Go to the center of the room, avoiding the corners, which attract debris.

If you are at home:

- Move to a pre-designated shelter, such as a basement or storm cellar. If there is none, go to an interior room on the lower level (Closet, interior hallway). Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to cover your head and neck.
- Stay away from windows and open spaces.

If you are outside:

- Get out of vehicles, trailers, and mobile homes immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy nearby building. Never try to outrun a tornado.
- If caught outside with no shelter, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential of flooding.
- Do not go under a bridge or overpass. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Watch out for flying debris from tornadoes, the cause of most fatalities and injuries.

Please be aware that sometimes tornadoes develop so rapidly; there is no visible advanced warning. During a tornado watch, avoid places with wide-span roofs such as an auditorium, cafeteria, supermarket or shopping mall; and be prepared to take shelter immediately.

For more information, please visit <http://www.mass.gov/eopss/agencies/mema/tornadoes.html> or talk to your office safety officer.

Thank you,

Mark Waterbury
Chief Operating Officer
Executive Office of Health and Human Services